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TRAINING COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 166 OF THE UNCTAD X PLAN OF ACTION

Report by the UNCTAD secretariat

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its tenth session, held in Bangkok (February 2000), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) adopted a Plan of Action (TD/386), which, in its paragraph 166, states the following:

> "166. UNCTAD's existing capacity-building programme should be strengthened. This would enable officials and other individuals from developing countries and some interested countries with economies in transition to become better informed, through regular training courses in cooperation with the United Nations Staff College, of key issues on the international economic agenda, in particular with development dimensions within UNCTAD's field of competence. These courses would draw on the expertise and policy analysis work of the UNCTAD secretariat, with the support of an advisory body to be established by the Trade and Development Board. In course delivery, cooperation and coordination would be assured with relevant research and academic institutions and with other relevant international organizations, taking into consideration the commitment of UNCTAD to the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance for the LDCs..."

2. In response to the above mandate, the UNCTAD secretariat organized the first training course to:

- Enhance the capacity of officials and other individuals from developing countries and some countries with economies in transition to become better informed of key issues on the international economic agenda, in particular those with development dimensions within UNCTAD's field of competence;

- Increase awareness of the diverse policy and other conditions necessary for attaining competitiveness and participating effectively in the rapidly changing global economic environment.

3. The syllabus of the course was designed to draw on UNCTAD perspectives and expertise in the area of trade and development policies and to disseminate and enhance understanding of UNCTAD's analytical work, as well as the lessons drawn from UNCTAD technical cooperation activities. The competence and expertise of other relevant international organizations were also brought to bear.

4. The course was aimed at senior government officers, at director or deputy director level, from ministries of trade, competition policy, planning, foreign affairs and finance, and central banks, involved in the formulation and implementation of national trade and development policies. A total of 18 participants from Africa, Asia, economies in transition and Latin American countries were selected to participate in this course.1

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1 See annex I for the list of participants in Addendum 1.

5. The training course was held over four weeks - from Wednesday, 20 June, to Tuesday, 17 July 2001. The first segment (20-22 June) and the final segment (16-17 July) were held in Geneva, while the core course was hosted at the United Nations Staff College/International Training Centre in Turin.

6. This report is written to document the organization and conduct of this training course and it includes recommendations for the holding of future courses. The organization of the course and administrative arrangements undertaken to ensure the proper conduct of the course are described in chapter II. The design, delivery and evaluation of the substantive content of the course by focal persons in the UNCTAD secretariat are described in chapter III. An evaluation of the participants in the training course is also described in that chapter. Recommendations for the holding of future training courses, based on the experience gained from this first course, and taking into account the availability of funds and other considerations, are contained in chapter IV.

7. The UNCTAD secretariat is deeply grateful to the Government of Italy, whose generous support made it possible to pay for all expenses related to the preparation and organization of the training course, including a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) for all participants. Some Governments were requested, and they agreed, to cover travel expenses to and from Geneva for their candidates. Travel expenses for six participants from LDCs were paid by UNCTAD.

Chapter I

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

8. The overall organization of the course and its administrative arrangements were the responsibility of the Information and Training Branch, Services Infrastructure and Trade Efficiency Division. Several meetings were held by the Branch Head to identify the following:

- Number and description of modules and the respective readings lists;
- Focal persons and resource persons for the modules and an adviser;
- The creation of a website;
- Media events – the distribution of notifications and reception of candidates
- The forming of a selection committee and the criteria according to which participants were selected for the course.

9. Seven modules were designed for this training course. The substantive content of the training course was contained in Modules 2 to 6, and these were held in Turin. The opening and closing sessions formed the first and last modules. Twenty-five resource persons2, including the focal persons, were selected to deliver courses in their respective modules 3.

10. A website was established for the training course4. The website contained information on the modules and related links to the reading lists, bio data of focal and resource persons, and a chat forum for participants to engage in discussions on any topic of the course. Focal persons were designated to moderate these chat forums and to respond to participants' questions and comments.

11. Application guidelines were designed along with a letter of notification to Governments5 to invite them to present candidates for selection. A press statement to this end was also issued on 19 June 2001. A total of 65 candidatures were received at UNCTAD, out of which 21 participants were selected according to the guidelines laid down, *inter alia* the career position of candidates within their Governments, their academic background and professional experience, their ability to disseminate the knowledge and information acquired during the course, and their proficiency in English. To this end, candidates were required to submit a two-page paper in English on the topic of their choice but related to the training course. All applications were to be submitted in English. A final list of 18 candidates were registered for the course.6

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2 See annex II for the list of focal persons and resource persons for each module and the sub-topics in Addendum 1.

3 See annex III for detailed list of modules in Addendum 1.

4 See www.unctad.org/p166.

5 See annex IV for notification and guidelines in Addendum 1.

6 The UNCTAD secretariat received cancellations from the Governments of three candidates a few weeks before the start of the courses. There were practical difficulties in choosing reserve candidates to attend the course, including lack of time to arrange for visas and travel to Switzerland and Italy.

12. The opening and closing sessions, ie., Modules 1 and 7 respectively were held in Geneva at the Palais des Nations. Modules 2 to 6, representing the substantive content of the course, were held at the United Nations Staff College/International Training Centre in Turin, Italy. The training course received financial support from the Government of Italy.7

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7 Please see annex V for a breakdown of financial details in Addendum 1.

Chapter II

DESIGN, DELIVERY AND EVALUATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT OF TRAINING COURSE

13. Seven modules were designed for this training course. Focal persons were identified for each module and were responsible for the selection of lecturers on individual sub-topics within each module. This chapter will provide a brief report of two separate evaluations. The first is an evaluation of each module, how each theme was developed and delivered by the focal persons, the response of participants and a self-critique by focal persons of their particular module. An evaluation of all participants by focal persons has also been developed. This is followed by a summary of the evaluation by participants of the training course, including its contents, delivery and organization.

A. Evaluation by trainers

14. This section contains the report by focal persons and their trainers on the design and delivery of the course, including the evaluation by trainers of participants' level of skills, their knowledge and the extent to which the participants assimilated the content of each module. Trainers were also requested to complete a self-critique on specific matters related to the organization, delivery and conduct of their individual modules, a summary of which is described at the end of this section.

1. Design and delivery

15. Module I was devoted to an introductory session where participants were presented with an overview of the functioning of UNCTAD and other Geneva-based institutions in the formulation of development policies, decision-making aspects and the content of their technical cooperation activities8.

16. The Division on Globalization and Development Strategies developed Module II (Interdependence and Globalization) and Module IV (Finance and Development). Both modules comprised four topics, each presented under two or three sub-topics. The course was organized in such a way that presentations on each sub-topic did not exceed 40 minutes and were immediately followed by question-and-answer sessions of up to 20 minutes. At the end of each topic the course was divided for parallel discussions in two groups.

17. Module II was delivered by a team of five staff members, and module IV by a team of six. The composition of the teams reflected the mix of expertise and teaching competence required to assure that the highest standards of teaching on each specific subject were met. An essential element in keeping participants' attention and concentration high was that presenters and style of presentation changed from one sub-topic to another, and that at least two but mostly more staff members were available at any point of time during the course. The members of the presenting teams intervened as required to round up presentations through comments, and their contributions significantly enriched the question-and-answer sessions and the group discussions.

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8 See annex VI for a list of UNCTAD speakers and international organizations that were invited to address participants in Addendum 1.

18. The general perception of all presenters was that participants, while having different and country-specific backgrounds and experiences, were all highly motivated and eager to acquire new insights into the subject matters. The proposed reading material was well used by most of them, both in preparing for the course and for subsequent in-depth study of some selected topics. In general, the presentations were very much appreciated by the participants, as for many of them they opened new perspectives on current issues in economic development. However, one or two presentations under module IV seem to have been too technical for part of the audience whose skills and experience were oriented towards international trade than to macroeconomics and finance. There is room for improvement with regard to the use of teaching aids, such as overhead projections and power point presentations, the preparation of which would have required considerably more time on the part of the presenters than was available at the time of organization of this training course.

19. In the group discussions, lasting around 60 minutes each, two trainers were present in each group, but a participant chaired the discussion. The participants themselves chose themes for the group discussions, so that specific interests of participants could be met. As several group discussions were offered in parallel, this formula also made it possible to take care of "minority" interests, which was an important element for the success of these two modules. After the discussions, each group presented a summary of the discussion to the plenary. The group discussions were highly appreciated by the participants and appeared to be very effective. They not only allowed participants to apply some of the freshly acquired knowledge to specific questions, to raise controversial issues and to deal with concrete problems in greater depth, but they also motivated more participants than in the plenary to actively engage in the debate.

20. Preparation and delivery of the course units represented a considerable additional burden for the staff, which the Division was able to absorb largely because it was distributed over many shoulders. However, different timing and a longer preparatory phase would no doubt have helped the staff members in optimizing their contribution.

21. Module III on International Trade and Development and Module VII on Simulation Exercise on National Decision Making Process were developed by the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities. That Division also faced practical problems due to its overall programme and limited human resources available to prepare the presentations. Even though five working days were devoted to module III, there was limited time available for the wide-ranging topics that were developed for this module. However, the objectives of the module were achieved, i.e. to highlight the importance of formulating a national trade policy that matches development needs, ensures beneficial insertion into the international trading system, takes into account regional and subregional commitments, and is duly reflected in a corresponding negotiating strategy. Ideally, in a longer module where more time would be available, more national cases showing these linkages with practical examples could be useful.

22. As noted by the participants, the main deficit in the overall topics covered by the module concerns the regional integration issues: this is an area where some "regionalisation" of the course could be a satisfactory solution (see the proposals made for future courses).

23. The one-day "simulation" exercise on the WTO negotiations was highly appreciated by all the participants, as it allowed an understanding of the mechanics of multilateral trade negotiations and some of the issues at stake.

24. The different professional and academic backgrounds of the participants were not a major obstacle for the delivery of the presentations and the discussions. However, regarding the WTO issues, and to prevent difficulties that may arise in other groups with more heterogeneous participants, it may be useful to strengthen the session devoted to the WTO agreements: instead of a descriptive presentation of some of the agreements, that session should concentrate on the WTO principles and rules that directly affect the formulation of a trade policy and negotiating strategy, such as the MFN clause, national treatment, the liberalization of market access, special and differential treatment, the links between trade rules and FDI, analogies between trade in goods and trade in services, the differences between traditional trade issues and "new issues" and their role in the trade negotiations.

25. The documents and other materials that supported the module seemed to be useful and sufficient, considering the time available for the readings and the non-specialized nature of the module.

26. Module VII was devoted to a simulation of a national decision-making process. The objective was to foster a better understanding of the complex process of policy-making at the national level in a rapidly changing global economic environment. Three different scenarios were developed based on the topics examined in the core syllabus of the entire course. These scenarios aimed at focusing the link between trade, investment and finance in the context of a developing economy and showing how integration into the global economic environment impacts the domestic policy-making process. Participants were particularly sensitive to the link between module III and the simulation exercised developed under module VII.

27. Modules V and VI were developed by the Division on Investment, Technology and Enterprise Development. The objective of Module V – on Investment and Development - was to define and evaluate the role of investment in the development process; to sensitize the seminar participants to the interdependence between national development strategies, domestic and foreign investment and innovation processes; and to embed these in the context of international trade, finance and globalization. This was accomplished by stressing that FDI-related strategies need to be derived from a development vision and constitute part of an overall industrialization strategy.

28. The seven sessions of the module covered concepts of and trends in FDI; investment promotion instruments and practices with regard to both inward and outward investment; international arrangements for FDI and the transfer of technology, notably standards of treatment in international agreements and intellectual property rights (IPRs); and the case for and role of competition policy, including concerns and modalities for international co-operation in competition policy.

29. All sessions were linked by a common theme: the growing knowledge-intensity of production and the ensuing need to enhance country-level competitiveness and hence for firms to learn and continuously improve their products and production technology. The emphasis of all presentations and discussions was on the policy implications of each area.

30. The investment and development module was presented with frequent references to the preceding and subsequent modules of the course. The sessions alternated formal lectures with discussions and case study work on selected countries and issues. This included small group

discussions of the FDI strategies of Costa Rica, Ethiopia and Malaysia; a simulation exercise in investment promotion; a debate on international discussions related to IPRs, and health issues; and an exercise on sources of FDI and trade data sourcing.

31. Throughout the module, the interaction was lively, and both the subject matter and the mixture of presentation formats were very well received by the participants

32. The objectives of Module VI which was on National Development Strategies, were twofold: (a) to examine interrelated policy measures at the domestic level to ensure the effective implementation of development strategies, and (b) to emphasize the need for policy coherence among trade, industrial, technology and innovation policies in order to ensure competitiveness at the firm and national level. These objectives were achieved, in spite of the fact that it was the last module held in Turin at the end of a long three-week session.

33. The combination of a more theoretical session, on "The changing nature of competitiveness at the national and firm level and the implications for the formulation of enterprise development strategies" and a more practical session on "Best practices in enterprise development" was successful and appreciated by the participants, and it is suggested that this distinction and these complementary approaches be repeated in the future.

34. The different academic and professional background of the participants was not a problem, even though the participants who were familiar with the topics discussed expressed the need for more in-depth presentations on the theoretical background. Conversely, other participants expressed the need for more concrete examples and case studies. A balance of both these requests can easily be achieved in any future course.

35. The sessions were delivered by three staff members from DITE, one from the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and one from the Division on International Trade and Commodities. This contributed to a comprehensive reflection of UNCTAD's position on investment and development. Given the varied backgrounds and expertise of the participants, each valued different elements of the module, but there was consensus that the module as a whole was very useful.

36. The issues that were of most interest for the participants were the following: industrial clusters, the role of technology as the driver of competitiveness, productive linkages among indigenous firms and foreign affiliates and export development strategies in the new economy. The presentations of the keynote speaker for both the first session (Emiliano Duch, Cluster Competitiveness) and the second session (John Gillies, International Trade Centre, Geneva) were particularly appreciated.

37. The link between modules V and VI was evident to participants as the focus shifted gradually and coherently from macro to micro issues throughout the training course. It is therefore suggested that this order of the modules be kept in the future. The material provided was comprehensive and sufficient, even though the distribution of selected chapters rather than full publications may be more effective in the future.

38. Group discussions took place in module VI, but they were confined to the end, due to the lack of time during the module. In this respect, the fact that the group exercise could not take place at

all 9 did not allow for the exchange of personal experiences of the participants. In the future, more attention will be paid to the time allocation and structure of discussion sessions.

2. Evaluation of participants by trainers

39. Trainers were requested to comment on the participants' level of skills, knowledge and attitude to the training course. All trainers agreed that most participants chosen for this training course demonstrated the required level of knowledge, experience and skills to comprehend the substantive content of the course. In particular, their skills in international economics issues ranged from adequate to high. However, some gaps in knowledge, especially in international finance issues, were visible, and this could be due to diverse academic backgrounds, the level of technical difficulty of the subject, different levels of responsibilities in ministries, for example between those employed in departments of finance and others engaged in trade and industry or commerce, and the heterogeneity of the participants coming from different geographical regions. Most participants were well versed in the field of international trade negotiations – at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels - and were able to grasp key issues quickly. Participants were motivated and eager to learn about new issues and demonstrated dynamism in-group discussions, especially in understanding the perspectives involved to analyse economic policy problems. A positive, constructive and lively interaction amongst the participants was noted.

40. Trainers were also requested to gauge the extent to which participates were able to assimilate the contents of individual modules. There was good participation in all modules at both the question/answer sessions and group discussions for specific tasks in each module. Participants demonstrated an understanding of the global picture of each module and were able to follow the linkages made between the modules. It was felt that a review should be conducted within six months at the end of the training course to determine the usefulness and applicability of the modules. However, in some specific sub-topics, it was felt that participants had difficulty in grasping issues, especially in understanding ODA flows and the problem of debt.

3. Self-critique by trainers

41. A self-critique exercise was also undertaken by trainers on specific matters pertaining to the organization and delivery of the modules. These included the following:

a. **Training materials**: These could be standardized through the use of power point presentations, overheads and hand-outs of published documents and reading materials. These could also be useful for participants in the review of literature and when disseminating information to other colleagues back in their capitals. It was felt that the literature for reading by participants could be more selective, as participants were given various UNCTAD documents from which only certain relevant chapters were considered required reading. Trainers also felt that they could have produced more examples of country or case studies, and included more variety in-group discussions through role playing and computer networking. Specific issues could also be included in the training

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9 There was a change to the particular day in the module where the session was shortened to half a day to accommodate several administrative arrangements for the participants' departure from the Turin Center to Geneva.

material; for example, participants felt that WTO negotiations could have formed a more important component of Module III.

b. **Case studies**: Trainers for some of the modules felt that few case studies were available to help illustrate issues. Practical examples were discussed on specific topics though; for example all participants were requested to review the national development strategies of three countries, taking into account the need to fuse development policies and corporate strategies. It was thought that participants could be asked to produce case studies arising from their own country experience for specific topics.

c. **Duration**: This training course was designed to provide a general overview of key issues in the international economic agenda. Trainers felt that more time was required in the delivery of their individual modules, as the scope of the themes was wide and at times it was clear that both the participants and the trainers could have benefited from more time on a specific topic. This was witnessed both in specific sub-topics and in Modules, where participants felt that Module IV on finance and development could have been longer and more time could have been spent discussing WTO issues and the ministerial meeting to be held in Doha. It is generally agreed too that presentations might be held in the morning and question/answer sessions and group discussions in the afternoon.

d. **Presentation**: There was general agreement amongst all trainers that there was a good dialogue between them and the participants, which intensified as the sub-topics of each module were delivered. Many trainees felt that there was no need to establish smaller working or discussion groups, as the group had only 18 participants.

e. **Other**: Most trainers were conscious of the need to avoid repetition in their sub-topics. This would entail a further coordination of the themes of the modules, their content and the sequence in which they should be presented. Trainers submitting the main message of their modules in advance to participants could also enhance the coordination process. Trainers felt that they had not had enough preparation time for their individual topics.

B. Evaluation by participants

42. All participants were requested to complete evaluation forms after the conclusion of each substantive module. They were also requested to complete a final evaluation questionnaire where they assessed the structure of the training course, the contents of the training course, its usefulness and application and their opinion on the conduct of the overall organization of the course in Geneva and Turin, including the administrative arrangements. The evaluation of each individual module has been useful to trainers in the appraisal of their modules and has provided useful insights on how future courses should be designed and conducted. In this section, a summary of the evaluation undertaken by the participants is presented.

1. Structure

43. Eighteen participants were chosen for this training course. The 17 participants who completed the evaluation forms at the closure of the training course felt that the number of participants was adequate. It also appears that most participants felt that the duration and workload

of the course were adequate. Two participants felt that it was too short, given the range of subjects covered, and consequently that they had little opportunity to discuss particular topics of relevance to their regions. Two participants also felt that the presentations were too long to maintain their attention for entire modules. While most considered the workload heavy, they were also aware that this was the first training course of this nature, and many participants were pleased to attend this particular type of course.

44. It appears that many participants (13/17) felt that trainers explained well the interfaces between the topics of the modules. The natural progression from macro considerations and the theoretical base to micro and enterprise levels was well established, and most participants felt that there was a good flow of subjects between the modules. While one participant was not entirely comfortable with this approach, others felt that the interface was achieved during the course.

45. Participants were forthcoming with suggestions for future courses for example that there should be different courses for different participants based on their background and seniority within their administration, and that courses should be longer, with more simulation exercises and more focus on group discussions. Many felt that basic concepts of the multilateral trading system can be dispensed with, however, and they suggest a regional approach to issues. Participants from LDCs also suggested a separate course focused on LDC issues and problems.

2. Contents

46. Seven participants felt that there were subjects that were not adequately covered in this training course. These include an elaboration of national development and micro economic issues; a broader introduction to the Uruguay Round Agreements and more information on the implementation issues related to multilateral trade disciplines; the new international financial architecture, and financing for development; macroeconomic accounts and the linkages amongst the various sectors where the real sector, banking and financial sector and the international sector could be better addressed through in-depth analysis; and finally more information on issues relating to standards of treatment.

47. Most participants were satisfied with the presentations of the trainers and the debates or discussions that were initiated during the course. However, most requested that further case studies spread over the three developing regions should be provided for analysis and review in each module. These could be complemented by more audiovisual presentations, which would have been useful in depicting real-life successful operations in developing countries, as was the case with national development objectives of Malaysia and Costa Rica reviewed by the participants. There were requests to improve the time allocation for the treatment of topics such as competition law and policy and trade negotiation rules.

48. Several suggestions were made to change the order of the lecture and discussion sessions. It was broadly agreed that discussion sessions should follow lectures and that this could be organized between morning and afternoon sessions respectively. Participants agreed that they should be requested to provide their opinions on particular topics relating to their country experiences. This should be a mandatory exercise, as it would provide an enhanced awareness of the issues in different countries. These points concur with earlier suggestions by participants that the discussion sessions

of the course be better structured, allowing time for more interaction. A suggestion was made that reading materials should be distributed well before the beginning of the course.

49. In summary, all participants found this training course in general to be very useful and regarded all policy issues that were addressed as pertinent and relevant to their jobs. In particularly, most participants found the sessions on the national decision-making process very useful, as they enhanced awareness of the preparations required to undertake negotiations initiated either bilaterally or at the multilateral level. The exercise to analyse some WTO negotiating proposals was also found very useful and relevant to most participants in their present jobs. Most participants felt that their knowledge of international finance was enhanced through the lectures delivered in module IV, and those on FDI analysis in module V were an important complement. The factual presentations on the structural features and trade patterns of the international trading system were also quoted as most revealing and useful. Participants requested further sessions on the WTO negotiating process, including sessions related to the future rounds of multilateral trade negotiations.

3. Usefulness and application

50. The objectives of this training course are mentioned in annex IV to this report. Participants were requested to evaluate the extent to which these objectives were met. All participants felt that the main features and trends that determine the international economic agenda from the point of view of development were successfully covered in this training course. Similarly, most participants were also satisfied that the interfaces between trade, investment and development issues and their implications for the formulation and implementation of integrated development strategies were also successfully dealt with by the trainers for the various modules in this training course. Participants were particularly appreciative of the use of multidisciplinary approaches in tackling the various aspects of trade and development issues during the course.

51. There were requests for further information on trade and development issues that concern particular developing countries and/or regions as some participants felt that examples of development objectives were limited to particular developing countries. A broader selection of country examples would help meet the objective of providing comparative national experience in the trade and development policies of developing and developed countries. This would also help to identify best practices in designing and implementing national, regional and international policies on trade, investment, finance and sustainable development.

52. To improve the usefulness and application of such training courses, participants felt that the conduct of regional courses would help achieve these goals for participants in particular developing regions. There were requests from all participants that regular contacts be established with the secretariat, and in particular with the trainers, to provide technical advice, analysis and general information to participants after the end of the training course, and particularly as participants take steps to share the acquired knowledge and information in their respective ministries.

4. Conduct of the training course

53. All participants were generally satisfied that the methods of work – presentations, audio-visual aids, discussion groups, case studies – were applied well and that their coverage and depth were largely appropriate during the training course. There were requests for early hand-outs of

reading materials well ahead of the training course to enable participants to better prepare for these lectures.

5. Organization and administration

54. Most participants had sufficient time to review the preliminary information material that was sent to them on the organization of the training course and to indicate their acceptance of the training course after approval from their respective Cabinets, Offices of the Prime Minister or Ministers. The flow of information was considered good, although it was felt that much of the information could be sent through the respective permanent missions.

55. For most participants, the objectives and goals of the training course were very well described in the information material sent to them. Participants also considered the course content and administrative details and arrangements good. The training course was being coordinated within the SITE Division of UNCTAD and had several professional staff who undertook the initial administrative and management aspects of the course. This tended to create some confusion with participants, as the flow of correspondence was not well coordinated. These matters were resolved when the Deputy Secretary-General appointed a team to handle the management and administration of the training course.10

56. Participants suggested that more information on the general timetable and main topics should be made available to them. They also requested information on weather, suitability of clothing for inclement weather, funding and transportation. It should be noted that participants were well informed of the daily subsistence allowance they were entitled to for their stay in Geneva. The substantive part of the course was held in Turin, and UNCTAD arranged travel and accommodation for all participants, who were also well informed of these arrangements. Participants seemed unaware that, for all United Nations travel for training purposes, transportation is usually not provided between the airport and the accommodation or hotels. The secretariat will make information on other participants available to all participants in future courses.

57. All participants were satisfied with the general administrative arrangements organized by the secretariat. They found the overall experience excellent and very useful for their daily work but also felt the constraint of time in relation to the wide variety of subjects that was planned in this course. Most participants also mentioned the good opportunity that this course presented in learning from trainers, networking with other participants and the general benefit they had from the experiences of their colleagues.

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10 The team comprised seven professional and one general service staff who were supervised by the Head of the Information and Training Branch of the SITE Division.

Chapter III

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TRAINING COURSESAND CONCLUSION

58. How should future training courses of this nature be organized and delivered to participants? What should their duration be, who should the recipients be? How can future courses be funded within the existing regular budget of the secretariat? This chapter studies these aspects, taking into account the views of the focal persons and their team on the design, delivery and conduct of the training course and of the secretariat for the organization, management and funding of this course. Participants' responses to these questions are also be analysed.

A. Trainers/participants ratio, selection and duration of course

59. About 25 focal persons and trainers delivered this training course to 18 participants. It follows from the evaluation of both trainers and participants that the organization of future courses needs to be better coordinated with the overall work programme of the substantive divisions involved. In the interest of both a smooth integration into the work programme and an optimal delivery of the course, it is necessary that courses under each module be delivered by teams of at least four presenters, providing a variety of expertise while supporting and complementing each other during the course. Consequently, the number of participants could be increased to 35 or 40. A future course with a 25/18 ratio of trainers and participants can no longer be envisaged, given the extraordinary time and effort that was required in the preparation of the first course. With higher participation, capacity-building efforts could also be addressed by disseminating the acquired knowledge within national departments. However, the fact that a large number of UNCTAD staff was engaged in the preparation and/or delivery of this course means that there is now a sufficient pool of resource persons conversant with the course objectives and content. They can be drawn on for future course delivery.

60. The selection of participants could be improved by paying attention to greater diversity of professional backgrounds and avoiding too strong a bias towards candidates from trade ministries. Participants themselves felt that two different courses focusing on senior and junior officials could be designed. This would eliminate the differences in experience and exposure to policy design and implementation amongst participants. Even though the motivation and seriousness of the participants was not a problem in Turin, one might envisage some form of graded written exam at the end of the course or of each module, with a view to giving additional value to any certificate delivered to participants.

61. It appeared impossible for any participant to absorb productively all the material presented during this short training course. A more focused course with different headings could be offered, for example "Globalization and strategies in international trade"; "Globalization, interdependence and the financial system", External financing, investment and debt", "FDI, external trade and national development strategies", "International trade negotiations and national development strategies", and the like, each combining the material content of what were two or three modules in the Turin formula. The linking of specific courses to different target groups is considered a viable option.

B. Regional courses

62. Many participants felt that such training courses, while focusing on two target groups for different periods, could also be offered in the different regions of the developing world, as this would add further focus on specific problems and challenges that confront those countries. This would require future training courses, in any form that may be adopted, to be offered in three languages – English, French and Spanish. It would also require the mobilization of resources for the design, delivery and conduct and organization of these courses that may be beyond the existing resources of the secretariat. This is considered a fairly ambitious project, given that there appeared to be no strong substantive arguments in favour of a decentralization of course delivery. Cultural and geographical diversity in the composition of participants, while having no impact on the effectiveness of course delivery, was a positive social and group-dynamic factor in the coherence of the Turin group. Specific regional interests can be addressed in smaller discussion groups, where problems and experiences of a certain region can also be usefully discussed with participants from other regions.

63. Further, it is considered highly unlikely that a similar course could be conducted by UNCTAD staff in any language other than English, except through simultaneous interpretation. Trainers chosen on the basis of their competence in the subject matter are typically not able to provide the same course in another official language. For instance, out of the nine staff from the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, who conducted Modules II and IV, only two would have been able to conduct a similar course in French, while only one each could have made a presentation in Spanish. Similar language constraints are seen in other modules with their respective trainers. While regional commissions or other consultants could be engaged to conduct specific portions of these courses in the appropriate language, it would seem meaningless for an UNCTAD training course to be delivered by presenters who are not staff members of the organization, with the danger of losing the specificity of UNCTAD's approach to the issues being considered.

C. Options for future courses

64. It appears that any future training course will involve trade-offs that need to be evaluated:

- (a) A regionally diverse course in three languages is beyond the capacity of the secretariat due to lack of trainers available to lecture in the languages concerned;
- (b) A similar course conducted in the same way as the first one could only discuss in-depth issues during discussion groups, not in the general lectures; the trainer-participant ratio would be too high to be cost effective;
- (c) A similar course with more participants, say 35 to 40, could raise difficulties with respect to the homogeneity of the group; more resources would be needed for the participants and consequently the simulation exercise would require adjustment to accommodate this large number of participants, and it may no longer be feasible to conduct this exercise in one day;
- (d) A course conducted at the regional level would immediately face language constraints, as explained earlier; the use of cons ants or other staff from regional commissions to lecture in the specific language concerned would entail giving up UNCTAD's specificity in the issues addressed in these courses; preparatory and

logistical support would be larger, requiring funds to be expended to this end; one way around this problem would be to establish a "rotating course" in different languages in Geneva/Turin, taking into account the fact that a larger group will require more resources, including the necessary adjustments to accommodate a larger group in terms of its homogeneity. Efforts must be made to ensure that UNCTAD staff is able to conduct the courses in the required language;

- (e) A course conducted jointly by UNCTAD and a local institution in a regional context would again entail giving up UNCTAD's specificity in the issues addressed during the course; while the same problems would be faced in terms of funds for the organization of courses outside Geneva, the cost of employing consultants must be taken into account.

65. Whatever the final option selected, the following elements need to be considered as a priority:

(a) The interlinkages between the components of the course;
(b) UNCTAD's views on the topics;
(c) The views of the Advisory Body as contained in chapter V of this report.

D. Immediate follow-up

66. A CD Rom containing the substantive content of the lectures, including the hand-outs, presentations and reading lists, has been created and distributed to the participants for their use back in the capitals. Feedback from participants already indicates that the CD Rom has been useful in disseminating the information learnt during the training course. One participant from Colombia reported that the structure and contents of the course match completely the areas in which he works and that this has also given rise to many ideas that he is trying to introduce in the work area he is currently involved in.

67. All lecture sessions were videotaped, and focal persons have been asked to review these in an effort to capture the essence of their individual modules, and see how these could be adapted to future training courses.

68. Finally, the website established for this training course contains a chat forum, and participants have been encouraged to maintain contact with each other, focal persons and other trainers. The secretariat intends to contact participants and their supervisors within six months of the end of the training course, to assess to what extent the contents of this course have indeed been useful to them in their work and what lessons participants have learnt.11 This information will provide insights that can contribute to the design of future training courses.

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11 The final evaluation by both participants and their supervisors will be produced separately as Addendum 2 to this report.

Chapter IV

VIEWS OF THE ADVISORY BODY

69. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD met with the Advisory Body on 27 September 2001, where he informed the Advisory Body of the overall organization and management of the training course, the reaction of participants and those of trainers. The Advisory Body was appreciative of the efforts undertaken by the secretariat and recorded its support for the holding of future courses. A debate ensued on the holding of future training courses, taking into account the views of the secretariat as reported in the previous chapter.

70. One member (from China) and the Chairman of the Advisory Body (Colombia), who both had participants from their capitals attending the training course, reported that there had been very positive feedback on the conduct of this training course from both their participants and the sending Departments in their capitals respectively. They also wanted to record their Governments' appreciation to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD for the comprehensive content of the course and for its success in meeting the objectives set out in the notification, especially the efforts made to transfer knowledge as envisaged under paragraph 166, and their support for the holding of future training courses. The member from Morocco suggested that the secretariat should now build upon the success of this course and indicate how future courses would be organized and conducted. The member from Egypt similarly requested that the secretariat could now present a general idea on how the next course could be undertaken, taking into account the constraints mentioned in the report.

71. Other members, namely from Ethiopia and Spain, requested that the impact of the training course on participants and their sending departments be monitored by the secretariat, as mentioned in the draft report, and that participants be requested to complete a questionnaire in about six months' time on how the course had impacted on the conduct of their jobs, on the dissemination of knowledge and information to other colleagues, and on how the sending departments assessed the value-added of their staff to the work of the department. The member from the United Kingdom agreed that the specificity of UNCTAD could be guaranteed by the training of future trainers for such a training course.

72. The meeting also considered the constraints facing the secretariat in holding future courses. In terms of content and management of future courses, there was an understanding amongst members that a similar course could not be undertaken again by the secretariat due to resource constraints and the preparations required. There was agreement that future courses could be specific in content, for example on WTO issues, while keeping in mind that sectoral and/or regional issues needed to be addressed simultaneously. Similarly, trade and development work done at UNCTAD could form the overall framework for a training course, while providing linkages to sectoral issues to reflect the interrelationship between these two. The concept of UNCTAD's work and emphasis on development should be maintained in order to meet the objectives of knowledge transfer and hence the value added of such training courses. Future courses should have a longer duration in order to allow time for the assimilation of the course content, taking into account the financial resources required. With the experience developed in the design of this course, the secretariat should attempt to reduce the burden on trainers in the design of future courses. The Advisory Body also welcomed the secretariat's initiative to produce a handbook and/or training manual based on the lectures and

material provided by the trainers in the first training course.

73. There were, however, no resources available to conduct a similar course in any of the developing regions. The secretariat might be able to conduct another course, taking into account the observations made above, and to include more participants in future courses. This too would have costs, as a higher number of participants would entail other logistical costs that the secretariat would have to absorb, but it was agreed that this would considerably lower the trainer-participant ratio. The secretariat also mentioned that funds for the holding of future courses might be available from the development account should there be approval from the General Assembly for this. The Advisory Body understood that the location of future courses would need to be considered in light of the development account's priority on enhancing local and regional capacities. It also understood that future courses might be held in Geneva, taking into account that the secretariat might be able to conduct similar courses at lower costs elsewhere than in Geneva.